

Proposed General Plan Update Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions



Green Building

The City of San José recognizes the environmental, economic and health benefits of implementing green building practices and the importance of maximizing the use of green building practices in the design, construction and operation of new and existing buildings. The City of San José is committed to the promotion of green building practices to further bring them into common use within the city and to support the development of new green building industries that support continued economic development.

Green Building Policy Leadership

Goal GB-1: Demonstrate San José’s commitment to local and global Environmental Leadership through progressive use of green building policies, practices, and technologies and achieve 100 million square feet of new or retrofitted green buildings by 2040.

GB-1 Leadership Policies:

- Policy GB-1.1 Ensure that all projects are consistent with the City’s Green Building Ordinance and City Council Policies, which require that projects incorporate various green building principles into their design and construction.
- Policy GB-1.2 Continually increase the number and proportion of buildings within San José that make use of green building practices.
- Policy GB-1.3 Continually update and strengthen the City’s Green Building policies and ordinances for new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings to reflect technological innovations in the green building field.
- Policy GB-1.4 Be recognized as a leader in the development and implementation of green building policies.
- Policy GB-1.5 Foster awareness in San José’s business and residential communities of the economic and environmental benefits of green building practices.
- Policy GB-1.6 Advocate for changes to local, regional, state, or national policies and laws to further the use of green building techniques and to further the development of green building technology.
- Policy GB-1.7 Recognize the interconnected nature of green building systems, and, in the implementation of Green Building Policies, give priority to green building options that provide environmental benefit in reducing water and/or energy use.

- Policy GB-1.8 Encourage retrofits for existing buildings throughout San José in order to align those buildings more closely with green building principles.

GB-1 Leadership Actions

- Action GB-1.9 Document green building new construction and retrofits as a means to show progress towards the Green Vision Goal of 50 million square feet of green buildings in San José by 2022 and 100 million square feet by 2040.
- Action GB-1.10 Develop programs that encourage individuals or businesses to complete green building retrofits for their properties through incentives such as tax credits, financing opportunities, or other means.
- Action GB-1.11 Train and educate staff in the latest green building policies and practices as a means to stay abreast of developments in the green building industry.
- Action GB-1.12 Continue to develop new and expand existing programs to educate San José's business and residential communities on the economic and environmental benefits of green building practices.
- Action GB-1.13 Provide green building technical assistance and referral service to available resources as appropriate for the public.

Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Use

- Goal GB-2: Maximize the use of green building practices in new and existing development to maximize energy efficiency and conservation and to maximize the use of renewable energy sources.**

GB-2 Energy Policies

- Policy GB-2.1 Develop and maintain policies, zoning regulations, and guidelines that require energy conservation and use of renewable energy sources.
- Policy GB-2.2 Maximize use of on-site generation of renewable energy for all new and existing buildings.
- Policy GB-2.3 Utilize building placement, design and construction techniques for new construction to minimize energy consumption.
- Policy GB-2.4 Promote energy efficient construction industry practices.
- Policy GB-2.5 Require 100-percent compliance with Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and insulation installation industry best practices (e.g., Quality Insulation Installation standards) for all new construction.

- Policy GB-2.6 Encourage responsible forest management in wood material selections and encourage the use of rapidly renewable materials.
- Policy GB-2.7 Promote roofing design and surface treatments that reduce the heat island effect of new and existing development.
- Policy GB-2.8 Encourage the installation of solar panels or other clean energy power generation sources over parking areas.

GB-2 Energy Actions

- Action GB-2.9 Develop policies which promote energy reduction for energy-intensive industries.
- Action GB-2.10 Develop, implement, and utilize programs that help businesses and homeowners improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings.
- Action GB-2.11 Develop policies to encourage the feasible use of building materials extracted and/or manufactured in California, or within 500 miles of San José.
- Action GB-2.12 Continue to review new development for the incorporation of green building practices, including those required by the Green Building Ordinance, that reduce energy use through construction techniques (e.g., design of building envelopes and systems to maximize energy performance), through architectural design (e.g. design to maximize cross ventilation and interior daylight) and through site design techniques (e.g. orienting buildings on sites to maximize the effectiveness of passive solar design).
- Action GB-2.13 Update the Green Building Ordinance to require use of energy efficient plumbing fixtures and appliances that are WaterSense certified, Energy Star rated, or equivalent in new construction and renovation projects.

Water Conservation

Goal GB-3: Maximize the use of green building practices in new and existing development to minimize use of potable water and to reduce water pollution.

GB-3 Water Policies

- Policy GB-3.1 Require landscaping for all new commercial and industrial development to use drought tolerant plants and no vegetative turf unless recreation needs or other area functions specifically requires turf.

- Policy GB-3.2 Promote use of green building technology or techniques that can help reduce the depletion of the City's potable water supply as building codes permit. For example, promote the use of captured rainwater, grey water, or recycled water as the preferred source for water needs.
- Policy GB-3.3 Promote the use of drought tolerant landscaping materials for commercial and residential uses.
- Policy GB-3.4 Promote the use of green roofs, landscape-based treatment measures, pervious materials for hardscape, and other stormwater management practices to reduce water pollution.
- Policy GB-3.5 Require new development in all Villages, Corridors and other identified growth areas, whenever possible, to provide parking above or below buildings, or in a parking structure. Avoid the construction of surface parking lots, unless the surface parking is an interim condition that is expressly intended to redevelop into a more cohesive urban form in the future.

GB-3 Water Actions

- Action GB-3.6 Develop and maintain policies, ordinances, and guidelines that require reduced use of potable water and that reduce water pollution.
- Action GB-3.7 Update the Green Building Ordinance to require installation of high-efficiency water fixtures and appliances that are WaterSense certified, Energy Star rated, or equivalent during construction or renovation of bathrooms, kitchens, laundry areas, and/or other areas with water fixtures/appliances that are proposed to be replaced.
- Action GB-3.8 Continue programs to educate single-family homeowners on water conserving landscaping methods and explore the development of programs to discourage the use of turf.
- Action GB-3.9 Develop policies to promote water use reduction, particularly by water-intensive industries.

Healthy Indoor Environment

- Goal GB-4: Maximize the use of green building practices in new and existing development to promote a healthy indoor environment.**

GB-4 Environmental Quality Policies

- Policy GB-4.1 Promote the use of building materials that maintain healthy indoor air quality in an effort to reduce irritation and exposure to toxins and allergens for building occupants.

Policy GB-4.2 Encourage construction and pre-occupancy practices to improve indoor air quality upon occupancy of the structure.

GB-4 Environmental Quality Actions

Action GB-4.3 Continue to develop and implement policies and ordinances to promote the use of building materials, furniture and paint that maintain healthy indoor air quality and to discourage the use of materials that degrade indoor air quality.

Action GB-4.4 Continue to develop and implement policies and ordinances to promote beneficial construction and pre-occupancy practices such as sealing of the HVAC system during construction, air flush-outs prior to occupancy, and/or air quality testing and corrections prior to occupancy.

Zero Waste

Goal GB-5: Redirect 100% of construction waste away from landfills by maximizing the use of green building practices in new and existing development.

GB-5 Zero Waste Policies

Policy GB-5.1 Promote use of recycled materials, including reuse of existing building shells/elements, as part of new construction or renovations.

Policy GB-5.2 Promote the energy and resource savings associated with adaptively reusing all or portions of existing buildings versus demolishing structures and rebuilding on a site. Consider this embodied energy when evaluating proposals for building demolitions.

Policy GB-5.3 Recycle all construction debris and salvage, recycle or reuse all demolition materials.